

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 862
By Bowers

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate WREG-TV upon the celebration of its 50th Anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly specially recognize those radio and television stations that, through an unflinching commitment and dedication to broadcasting fair and factual local news, have enriched the lives of local citizens and have contributed significantly to the history and culture of the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable television station, which recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary, is WREG-TV of Memphis, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, important community news and information sources, local television stations provide coverage of local, national, and world events in a timely fashion for viewers; and

WHEREAS, WREG-TV's esteemed history began with Hoyt Wooten, an electrical engineer who aspired to build a radio station in the Memphis area; and

WHEREAS, on September 22, 1922, Hoyt Wooten began broadcasting from his home in Coldwater, Mississippi, on 10 watts of power transmitted under an issued license; the radio station, KFNG, was the first commercial radio station in the state; and

WHEREAS, in September of 1926, KFNG moved to Whitehaven and incorporated as Wooten's Radio-Electric Company (WREC); increasing power to 200 watts on a frequency of 600 kilocycles, WREC shared frequency with WOAN of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, on July 19, 1928, Hoyt Wooten was granted a permit, one of the original six in the United States, to build and operate a closed-circuit experimental Composite V.T. television transmitter; and

WHEREAS, increasing power to 500 watts and then 1,000 watts, WREC opened a new 25,000-dollar studio in the basement of Hotel Peabody on April 23, 1929; and

WHEREAS, committed to broadcasting important local news, WREC became a basic affiliate of CBS on October 15, 1922; and

WHEREAS, WREC cancelled all regular programming to remain on the air constantly with flood reports and flood relief messages from January 24, 1937 to February 13, 1937, a testament to WREC's service as an advocate for the people of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, in April of 1952, Hoyt Wooten and WREC applied for VHF Channel 3 in Memphis, and three years later, after a lengthy license application procedure before the Federal Communications Commission, they were unanimously granted the rights to TV Channel 3 by the FCC on May 27, 1955; and

WHEREAS, approximately seven months later, on December 31, 1955, a day ahead of the station's formal beginning, WREC-TV went on the air with the Gator Bowl; and

WHEREAS, with full local and CBS network service beginning the next day, Sunday January 1, 1956, WREC-TV began operations as a CBS affiliate; WREC-TV used WREC's radio show, "Breakfast Club," as the model for the television program "Good Morning from Memphis"; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 1962, Mr. Wooten sold WREC-TV to Cowles Communication, Incorporated, and he later passed away at the age of 76 on December 6, 1969; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, Cowles Communication, Inc., sold WREC-TV to The New York Times Company, which currently owns the station, and WREC-TV was changed to WREG-TV; and

WHEREAS, as part of the Downtown Memphis revitalization program, WREG-TV moved to its current location in Memphis on the east bank of the mighty Mississippi River at 803 Channel 3 Drive in 1975; and

WHEREAS, always endeavoring to remain true to the highest principles of news reporting and news broadcasting, WREG-TV housed the Mid-South News Network (MSNN), the only 24-hour local news channel in Memphis in 1992; and

WHEREAS, WREG-TV News Channel 3 has distinguished itself in the Memphis market through its tradition of excellence and emphasis on local news and information, local programming, local weather, and local sports; no other television station in Memphis can boast of airing more local news broadcasts and specially produced local shows than WREG-TV; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, WREG-TV has served as a beacon of truth and integrity in the Memphis community by providing fair, factual, and timely coverage of important local news and events; and

WHEREAS, the employees and staff at WREG-TV epitomize the spirit of volunteerism and dedication to excellence that are characteristic of all true newscasters and Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this legislative body recognize and honor WREG-TV for their many years of service to the good people of the Memphis community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the employees and staff of WREG-TV upon the celebration of their 50th Anniversary, commend their service to the citizens of Memphis and the State of Tennessee, and wish them every success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.